

QUESTION RE DEGREES OF AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN
in 1986 Class
Answered by Willis E. Bishop

I'm not sure I know. There are going to be degrees of rewards, degrees of acknowledgement, but I do not see any degrees of authority as far as heaven is concerned. When the Lord comes to establish His millennial kingdom we will rule and reign with Him, so there will be some tasks for us to do here as far as the earthly realm is concerned, and there will be authority which we will be given, but I think this is other than the heavenly realm and the fellowship we will enjoy there.

Q. Satan became proud -- where did he get his freedom?

A. Every creature that God created -- angels, seraphim, cherubim, mankind -- was created with free will -- a choice to worship God or not worship Him. That's what He gave to Adam in the Garden. Christ, you remember, said of the angels, "They do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." Their period of probation and testing is over and they are confirmed in that holiness which they chose, for they chose to stay with the Lord rather than to follow Satan. We will be like that as well. As believers we are secure, and when we get to heaven the old nature is gone, nothing enters that defiles and that old nature certainly would, so that we will be confirmed in our righteousness. Satan, during that period of probation when he could have followed God, chose to rebel, even as Adam chose to follow Satan's suggestion rather than obeying the Lord. The period of probation is over for the angels and Satan and his hosts are confirmed in their wickedness; the holy angels are confirmed in their righteousness and "do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." So he got his ability to rebel from the free will that God placed into every creature He has created.

Q. Then heaven was not complete [as far as being able to sin is concerned].

A. I'm not sure I would use the word "complete." As far as heaven being complete is concerned, the numbers are not all there yet, but as far as the conditions are concerned, it's what the almighty, all-knowing, all-wise God decided was the best thing to be done. Therefore, in that sense, I think it's perfect and complete. God would not have allowed it to be otherwise. We have to remember we're dealing with a God who knows all things, He knows what's best, and He allows only what is best, and therefore it's complete as far as He's concerned, except the numbers are not complete. The Church is complete in the sense that it is a body that's complete but it's growing as an infant grows.

* * * * *